

In February, federal law requires that over-the-air broadcast television signals switch from analog to digital. At that time, you'll either need to own a digital television or purchase a converter box. Many television channels are airing ads announcing this move, and more information is available by calling 1-888-388-2009 or visiting <http://www.fcc.gov/fcc-bin/bye?https://www.dtv2009.gov>

But for those who receive their television signal from a cable company, there's another potential problem that is not receiving as much attention. Cable companies around the country are slowly moving their analog channels to digital frequencies, meaning viewers without digital television will begin to lose access to some channels.

This move is purely a business decision and is in no way related to the federal changes to broadcast signals, but it may still cause you problems. When your cable company decides to move some or all of the channels onto a digital service tier, they may notify you that you need "digital" equipment to continue receiving service. If you do not currently use a digital television, this may include renting or purchasing a digital cable set-top box or purchasing a digital cable ready television.

It is important to note that digital cable equipment is different from the analog-to-digital converter boxes that are needed for over-the-air antennas. Information on set-top boxes needed for cable can be obtained from your service provider.

Not sure whether your television is digital or not?

By law, all new televisions must have internal digital tuners. However, just because a television was purchased recently doesn't mean it was manufactured recently. Many retailers are still selling analog televisions that will require extra equipment to receive digital signals.

Many digital-ready televisions will have labels or markings on them to indicate that they contain digital tuners. These labels or markings may contain the words "Integrated Digital Tuner," "Digital Tuner Built-In," "Digital Receiver," or "Digital Tuner," "DTV," "ATSC," or "HDTV" (High Definition

television). If your television equipment contains any of these labels or markings, you should be able to view all digital programming. You can also check the manual or any other materials that came with your television to determine whether it contains a digital tuner.

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